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THE BUILDING NEWS

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"AN INDEPENDENTLY OWNED AND OPERATED BUDGET SYSTEM LICENSEE"

Banks agree \$25 bn deal for US homeowners

WASHINGTON (AFP) - President Barack Obama and top US mortgage lenders unveiled a landmark \$25 billion deal yesterday to help struggling homeowners get back on their feet and to untether the moribund housing market.

REE

Five of the country's top banks, the federal government and 49 states -- all except Oklahoma -- agreed to help homeowners cut their mortgage debt, avoid default or get compensation for unfair home repossessions.

The agreement provides a glimmer of hope for four million families who lost their homes during the financial crisis and the millions more who watched the market value of their homes slump while the cost of their mortgages remained at boom-era prices.

It also offers an estimated \$2000 in compensation for

everyone who lost their homes amid questions about banks losing paperwork and signing documents without due process -- so-called robosigning.

The housing bubble was at the center of the 2008 financial crash, the worst in 80 years.

In the boom years, Americans borrowed beyond their means as Wall Street overdosed on exotic mortgage-based derivatives, further inflating the market.

While the three-year deal will not come close to cleaning up all the damage caused by the crisis, there is expectation it will be a boon for the market and the broader economy.

But details -- particularly how much is used to write-off mortgage principal -- will determine how much of a boon, according to Ted Gayer, co-director of economic studies at The Brookings Institution.

Private sector compelled by law to offer pension plan to all employees!











ORANJESTAD -- As of last month, all private sector employees had a one percent deduction on their pay slips, which represents the 1% from their gross salary to be designated for a pension plan. At the same time, the employer is also obliged to contribute with 1% towards the employee's pension porgam. This obligation was enacted on Janaury 1st, 2012 when the law was passed and put into effect.

The new Obligatory General Pension Porgram stipulates that every employer must ensure that each employee in his/her service have an insurance plan to supplement the AOV insurance plan available to all citizens on Aruba.

The government is of the opinion that every citizen must have an additional income alongside of the AOV, which

has proven to be insufficient, when they retire. The amount received from AOV upon retirement is insufficient in most cases and makes it virtually impossible for retirees to survive without taking on work after retirement. As a result, it is not uncommon to find seniors working hard long after retirement in order to make ends meet.

The law regarding the obligatory pension plan is a rather simple law, according to the government. Employers are obligated to introduce a suitable pension program for their employees. They are then required to withhold a premium

in their salary administration. The employer and the employee are required to each pay 3% of the premium. This year, however, as a transition, the requirement is 1%, and next year, the minimum will be 2% for each. Obviously, the larger the premium will mean a heftier payout in pension at retirement. But, there is a legal limit.

According to the government, it normally takes about 40 years of continuous employment for a person to complete a full cycle of a pension program. Most of the people employed today no longer have 40 years to work.]

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http://www.themorningnewsaruba.com/index.php/photography-contest





First workshop on Stress and Health by IBISA



ORANJESTAD -- The "Instituto Biba Saludabel I Activo" (IBISA) just recently conducted their very first workshop on Stress and Health for their employees. The four hours workshop was under the leadership of Dr. Henry Does. Dr. Does is the promoter of a balanced health life style with emphasis on biological health and safety. Does also considers matters such as: personal relationships, job activities, common sense, personal identity, and time and energy.

The participants who were kept very active throughout the workshop, received a course map of the "Stress and Health' program which they could study further in their homes. Last Wednesday Dr. Does offered the Stress and Health program to all employees of Directie Volksgezondheid at the Holiday Inn Hotel.

Various employees of IDE-FRE were also in attendance. IDEFRE is the government organization for the promotion of sports and recreation on Aruba. On the 15th of June, reportedly, this organization will be changing its name to become IBiSA. This new organization will be the national insitute for health, recreation and sports. It is expected that this now institution will have a larger scope of activities and programs in keeping with Aruba's National Plan to combat obesity and overweight in our community.

IBiSA will have its focus on the promotion of health and on the prevention of diseases. They will emphasize healthy eating, physical excercise and on the reduction of the use of alcohol. IBISA will work in cooperation with other stakeholders involved in health care, education, social work and commerce in an effort to stimulate better care and the proper personal management of health and well being of everyone in the community. IBISA's website is: www.salud.aw.



Arubus schedule for this Carnaval weekend

ORANJESTAD -- Arubus is offering a special schedule to facilitate islanders enjoying the events taking place over the weekend, and to relieve the stress of finding parking or being blocked in by other inconsiderate drivers. On Saturday, February 11, when the Lighting Parade is over, there will be extra busses leaving the bus station in Oranjestad to make sure that everyone can get home or to the San Nicolas bus station safely, particularly in the case of consumption of alcohol. There is nothing more pleasant after a night of partying than to sit and relax in a bus and go home without having to bother with the traffic or people driving irresponsibly. Arubus has experienced and conscientious drivers, capable of bringing everyone safely to their destination.

Sunday, February 12, is the Oranjestad Children's Carnaval parade. Arubus will also have extra busses on standby at the Oranjestad bus station for all those who do not have their own transportation and there will be extra trips added to the schedule, if necessary.

Please note that commuters going to the hotel area for work and resort guests who have attended the parades will find additional busses on standby, so they need not be concerned of overcrowding. The additional busses will be deployed if needed.

Because the crossing at Piet's Ice cream in the Caya Ernesto Petronia is still closed, there will be a small change in that route to accommodate passengers.

The schedule will be as fol-

Sa	atur	day Lighting Parade	Sunday Children Parade					
Time	Line	Route	Time	Line	Route			
14:10	L-3	Sta Cruz- Sero Alejandro- Lago Heights	14:30	1-2	Dakota- Congoweg-Lago heights-San Nicolas			
14:25	L-1	Dakota - Lago Heights	Section 1985					
14:45	L-2	Dakota- Congoweg- Lago heights	15:00	L-3A	Sta Cruz-Bernhardstraat-San Nicolas			
15:10	L-3	Sta Cruz- Sero Alejandro- Lago Heights	15:30	L-2	Dakota- Congoweg-Lago heights-San Nicolas			
15:25		Dakota - Lago Heights	16:00	L-3A	Sta Cruz-Bernhardstraat-San Nicolas			
15:45	L-2	Dakota- Congoweg- Lago heights	16.20					
16:10	L-3	Sta Cruz- Sero Alejandro- Lago Heights	16:30	L-Z	Dakota- Congoweg-Lago heights-San Nicolas			
16:25	L-1	Dakota - Lago Heights	17:00	L-3A	Sta Cruz-Bernhardstraat-San Nicolas			
16:45	L-2A	Sta Cruz - Congoweg	17:30	L-2	Dakota- Congoweg-Lago heights-San Nicolas			
17:10	L-3	Sta Cruz- Sero Alejandro- Lago Heights	18:00	1-21	Sta Cruz-Bernhardstraat-San Nicolas			
17:25	L-1	Dakota - Lago Heights						
17:45	L-2	Dakota- Congoweg- Lago heights	18:30	L-2	Dakota- Congoweg-Lago heights-San Nicolas			
18:05	L-1	Dakota - Lago Heights	19:00	L-3A	Sta Cruz-Bernhardstraat-San Nicolas			
18:10	L-3	Sta Cruz- Sero Alejandro- Lago Heights	19:30	1-2	Dakota- Congoweg-Lago heights-San Nicolas			
18:25	L-1	Dakota - Lago Heights	13.30		Danota Congoneg Lago heights san Medias			
18:45	L-2	Dakota- Congoweg- Lago heights						
19:10	L-3	Sta Cruz- Sero Alejandro- Lago Heights						
19:25	L-1	Dakota - Lago Heights						

Private sector compelled by law to offer pension . . .

Continued from page 1

In their case, the law has a special opportunity for them to acquire an extra pension simply by paying a higher premium. In the event an employee already has 55 years of age, he/she can no longer apply for a pension program. However, for this group there is a special provision. They would pay the same premium that all other employees are paying, but at retirement they can receive a higher payout as a lump sum. This will be possible because of the accumulated interest paid on their premium.

Each employer is obliged by law to inform their employees adequately and clearly what exactly is involved in the pension program and how it works. They are required to establish a policy with an insurance company and determine how much premium they want to pay, not withstanding they cannot pay less than the legal requirement. It is also possible to include certain benefits in their insurance package, such as death, sickness, widow or widower benefits, etc.

Any employer who may not

have completed the process of incorporating an insurance plan for their employees, have untill the end of March to have this in place for every employee. Failure to comply will incure a hefty fine of 250 thousand Aruban florins. Employees who have not received this mandatory coverage from their employer as yet, need to find out from the employer what the status is. This General Pension Program will benefit over 30 thousand citizens in the private sector!



DOPV to be renamed Department of Santa Rosa to air **Public Transport**

ORANJESTAD -- After many changes and the implementation of a totally new structure, the DOPV will be completed revamped and renamed. The government is now at the place where they can send out solicitations for a new director to lead this new department.

This new department will ensure that every driver of taxis and tour busses will be medically certified by SVB doctors. New regulations for tour buss operators at the wharf are in place, specific protocols for taxis and small busses have also have been enacted. All in all, these appear to be positive changes for our public transportation system.

According to the government, they have achieved the goal of modernizing and improving the management and organization of DOPV. In view of all the many changes, they decided to also rename the organization in order to adequately reflect the changes and new operational process of the department. Hence, DOPV will be renamed: The Department of Public Transport (DTP).

The 8th of February was the last day that one could have applied for the new position of Director of this new department. During the week of the 13th of February we can expect an official announcement of who will be the new director

of the completely revamped department.

Following the nomination of a new director, the next step will be the nomination of two commissions which will be followed by the nomination of employees for the new department.

By April 1st. 2012, the Department of Public Transport should be completely operational in its new structure and

The government expressed their satisfaction with the changes made and is certain that in the future they will see even more positive changes for this new Department of Public Transport.

informative TV program

ORANJESTAD -- "Santa Rosa ta Informa" is gearing up to present their informative television program on Monday, February 13 at 7:00pm on TeleAruba.

In that television program they will address information related to their water mills, particularly those at Pavia. They will explain what these mills have meant for us in the past for our agriculture and live stock. Mario Fingal is expected to appear on the television program with information on the water mill located at Pavia. Fingal is a resident of the Pavia barrio who has a wealth of information to share with the televiewers. Despite his respectable age, Mr. Fingal agreed to share his knowledge with Aruba, and to

tell us some of the anecdotes of the past and how

Byron Boekhoudt, representative of the Fundacion Centro di Pesca Hadicurari, will highlight some of the changes being made at the Center. He will also point out the improvements made at the Center in keeping with the vision of the government for our fishermen around the island. Boekhoudt will also report on the successful Lionfish Derby held last year, and what are the ideas and plans for this new year at the Centro di Pesca Hadicurari.

Everyone is reminded to tune in to TeleAruba on Monday the 13th of February at 7:00pm for another interesting "Santa Rosa ta Informa" pro-

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The luxury of leat

A Valentine's gift from island artists to the people and Aruba National Library



A gift for participants and Lt. Governor



Digna Lacle and Lio Booi



A new book for the library from Sherry Farro

With the premiere holiday dedicated to lovers looming, a number of island artists, poets and performers banded together to present an ode of affection to the Aruba National Library, as part of the presentation of a book of poems titled "Nos Rosa," from noted local poetess Sonia Ruiz.

Possibly one of the most poignant symbols of love and devotion, there is no doubt a ruby red rose is a favorite gift from one beloved to another and is strongly identified with Valentine's Day. Exactly one week prior, Tuesday, on February 7, an audience, which included Aruba's Lt. Governor, Ella-Yaza-Tromp garay, enjoyed special evening at the archive annex on Bachstraat based on this fragrant flower.

MC and organizer of the Mirto event, Lacle, introduced a long line of Aruban cultural luminaries, quite a few bearing the name "Rose" or some variation. Mikayla Ruiz and Lidwina Booi, joined singer Sharon Rose,

w h o performed the Bette Midler

hit "The Rose." Rosebelle Illis recited her original poem, "From Plant to Seed, We Conceive," and Digna Herrera-Lacle recited four original haiku about roses, which she composed for the occasion.

Hubert "Lio" Booi, noted artist and musician and founder of Aruba's Institute of Culture, created four

rose paintings inspired by "Nos Rosa," which Harry Zimmerman presented in a special video that completed the evening.

Sonia Ruiz presented copies of her books of poetry, "Nos Rosa" and "Rubianita" to Director of the National Library, Astrid Britten, as well as

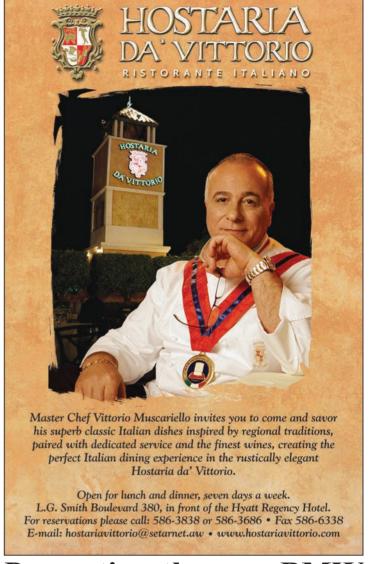


to Lt. Governor Yazagaray and one to each of those who participated to produce this charming night of romantic culture.

by Rosalie Klein



MC Mirto Lacle with one of 4 rose paintings by Lio Booi



Presenting the new BMW **ActiveHybrid 5**



BMW takes the development of intelligent hybrid drive systems to the next level with the introduction of the BMW ActiveHybrid 5 – another series-produced model in which a combustion engine and electric motor join forces to enhance both efficiency and the brand's hallmark driving pleasure. The BMW ActiveHybrid 5 brings together a BMW TwinPower Turbo six-cylinder in-line engine, an electric drive system and an eight-speed automatic gearbox for the first time.

The latest generation of BMW ActiveHybrid technology also adds precisely controlled – and therefore extremely effective - intelligent energy management to the mix. All of which gives the BMW ActiveHybrid 5 an exceptional balance of performance and fuel economy

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The drive system generates combined output of 250 kW/340 hp, allows the car to be driven on electric power alone up to 60 km/h (37 mph), accelerates the BMW ActiveHybrid 5 from 0 to 100 km/h (62 mph) in 5.9 seconds, cuts average fuel consumption to between 6.4 and 7.0 liters per 100 kilometers (40 – 44 mpg imp) and has CO2 emissions of just 149 – 163 g/km (figures according to EU test cycle, may vary according to the tyre format specified).

On Aruba, Ultimate Automobiles is the exclusive autodealer of Suzuki cars. For more information on the differnet Suzuki moels, visit their showrom at Sabana

Blanco 35

Generous donation by artist Grace Ashruf



Local artist Grace Ashruf held a succesfull one-woman Art Exhibition 'Destination' in October last year for two weeks in the old Toyota Building (sponsored by Garage Cordia at the LG Smith Blvd 114,) with a collection of 30 large paintings. Many of these artworks went to local and international collectors of contemporary art.

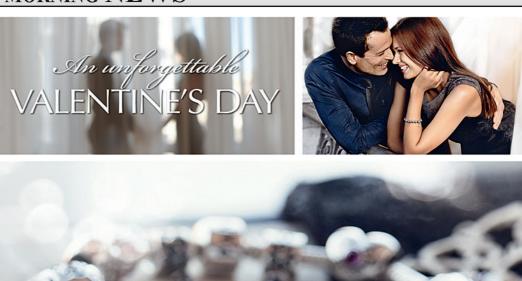
Grace generously promised again to donate a percentage of sales, this time to Children's home Casa Cuna in Aruba. Recently, Corina Linssen, Director of the home, accepted a generous check from the artist in presence of Astrid Muller. Casa Cuna surprised the artist Grace Ashruf with a beautiful thank you painting, created with colorfull prints of the little hands and feet of all the children residing in Casa Cuna. In 2009 Grace donated

in the same way part of her proceeds to Kinderhuis Imeldahof. One of her art collectors added an extra amount to the donation, just like in 2009.

Casa Cuna Progreso Foundation is a children's home society and was founded on April the 4th 1957. (The foundation has an important place within the Aruban Community)

Children between 0-8 years old, residing in Aruba and that are subject to the inclusion criteria of Casa Cuna Progreso are cared for and supervised. The assistance that Casa Cuna Progreso offers focuses merely on children who are in a difficult parenting situation. With difficult parenting situation is meant that there could be a crisis situation in the family, educational or emotional neglect, abuse, behavioral or emotional problems.







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PANDORA

Group honoring at the Divi Aruba Phoenix Beach Resort



Recently a very nice group of loyal Aruba visitors were honored by the Aruba Tourism Authority as Distinguished Visitors of Aruba. The honorees, all members of the Divi Phoenix, are Mr. Edand and Mrs. Lynn Williams, Mr. James and Mrs. Mary Moravcik, Mr. Michael and Mrs. Barb

Breen and Mrs. Lucille Fazz-ina.

The symbolic honorary title is presented in the name of the Minister of Tourism as a token of appreciation to guests who visit Aruba for 10 to 19 consecutive years. The honorees all have one thing in common they love Aruba very much for

the weather, the people, the beaches and restaurants and everything else Aruba has to offer.

The certificates were presented by Aruba Tourism Authority representative Ernest Giel in presence of a representative from the Divi Phoenix Beach Resort.

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TUESDAY AND FRIDAY: LIVE MUSIC

INTERNATIONAL NEWS

Arrest warrant for Maldives ex-president



Mohamed Nasheed

MALE (AFP) - A judge issued an arrest warrant yesterday for the ex-president of the Maldives, who says he was forced from office in a coup, as troops deployed to restore order in the violence-wracked holiday paradise.

Police said they were holding the warrant for Mohamed Nasheed, the Indian Ocean country's first democratically elected president, but had yet to execute the order.

"We can arrest him when we feel the need for it. We have to be careful and tactical as to how and when we do it," police spokesman Abdul Mannan Yusuf told AFP.

Nasheed, who has hunkered down at his modest family home in the capital Male since losing the presidency on Tuesday, appealed for urgent foreign help.

"They have issued a warrant to arrest me now and said that I will be the first former president to spend the rest of his life in jail," he told AFP. "I hope the international community will take note and do something right now."

While dozens of his supporters surrounded the threestorey home, elsewhere in the country the police and army struggled to re-take control after a night described by a presidential aide as "anarchy".

Maldives police commissioner Abdulla Riyas said 18 police stations had been attacked on outlying islands in the archipelago, while numerous court and government buildings had been looted and torched.

The images of rioting are potentially devastating for a country which depends on tourism thanks to its crystal-clear turquoise waters, coral-fringed beaches and ultra-luxury resorts

Although resort managers and tour agents have reported only a small number of cancellations, the unrest that followed Nasheed's ousting has begun inching closer to key tourist infrastructure.

Meanwhile, the United States said yesterday it recognizes the new government of Maldives President Mohamed Waheed as the legitimate one.

"We do," State Department spokeswoman Victoria Nuland told reporters when asked if the United States recognizes the new government as the legitimate government of the Maldives.

Europe's Danube freezes over, cold snap toll at 460

BELGRADE (AFP) - Thick ice closed vast swathes of the Danube yesterday, crippling shipping on Europe's busiest waterway, as the death toll from bitter cold across the continent rose to at least 460.

As it has every day for nearly two weeks, the brutal cold claimed lives in several countries and killed dozens more in weather-related accidents.

The 2,860-kilometre (1,780-mile) Danube, which flows through 10 countries and is vital for transport, power, irrigation, industry and fishing, was wholly or partially blocked from Austria to its mouth on the Black Sea.

Navigation was impossible or restricted in Serbia, Croatia, Bulgaria, Romania, Hungary and Austria, as ice covered the river or formed dangerous floes in shipping lanes.

An official from the Serbian economy ministry said the

commercial repercussions "could be very bad", while infrastructure ministry official Pavle Galico said shipping would not resume for 10 days.

Bulgarian authorities, who have banned all navigation on the river, reported 224 vessels stuck in ports, and Ukrainian rescuers in Croatia reached three crew members on a ship trapped in the ice since Friday.

Temperatures in Bulgaria dropped to a new record low yesterday of minus 28.6 degrees Celsius (minus 19.5 Fahrenheit) in the northwestern town of Vidin. The country has halted all power exports due to the cold snap.

Serbian railways, meanwhile, said the famed Balkan Express train that runs from Belgrade to Istanbul would only go as far as Sofia for now because of the flooding in Bulgaria.

In the Czech Republic forecasters said temperatures could been run since 1997.

plunge to minus 40 Celsius in the mountains and minus 25 Celsius in Prague on Saturday night.

Another blast of freezing weather was also predicted for Italy, even as soldiers worked to free villages trapped in three meters of snow and with the death toll from the cold snap already at 43.

Forecasts said freezing winds would bring more snow on Friday and Saturday to Rome, just recovering from its biggest snowfall in decades.

Germany was forced Wednesday to draw on its reserves for producing electricity for the second time this winter.

While many in Europe were fed up with the bitter cold, residents in the Netherlands were disappointed with a slight warming in that country that resulted in a legendary ice-skating race along canals being cancelled. The race has not been run since 1997

Noriega's daughters seek medical access to ex-dictator

PANAMA CITY (AFP) - Manuel Noriega's daughters called yesterday on the government to allow his private doctors to have access to the former dictator, who was hospitalized over the weekend after an apparent stroke in prison.

Noriega's daughters and private doctors told AFP they had been given no information about his medical condition, despite requests for access to his clinical record.

"We have requested that his private doctors be given access, and we still have not been able to obtain it," said Sandra Noriega, one of Noriega's three daughters.

The 77-year-old Noriega was rushed from his prison cell to Santo Tomas Hospital in Panama City on Sunday. Health

Minister Franklin Vergara said that day that the former strongman showed "symptoms that indicated a stroke."

"Noriega is in stable condition" but more tests are needed, the health ministry said in a statement Wednesday. He had initially only been expected to remain in hospital for 48 hours.

Eduardo Reyes, the head

doctor of Noriega's private medical team, said the former general was a "high risk patient" based on his medical history, which has included previous strokes.

"We have certified at different moments in writing that he should remain in the hospital where he is now or be transferred to a private clinic," Reyes said.



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INTERNATIONAL NEWS

Britain to defend Falklands right to self-determination

STOCKHOLM (AFP) - Britain will defend the Falkland Islands' right to self-determination, Prime Minister David Cameron insisted yesterday after Argentina said it would complain to the UN over the disputed territory.

"As long as the people of the Falkland Islands want to maintain that status, we will make sure that they do and we will defend the Falkland Islands properly to make sure that is the case," Cameron told reporters in Stockholm.

Tensions have risen ahead of the 30th anniversary of a war between Britain and Argentina over the archipelago.

Argentine President Cristina Kirchner said Tuesday that Buenos Aires would lodge a formal complaint with the United Nations over what she branded Britain's militarisation of the South Atlantic.

Britain has deployed a warship to the area and dispatched Prince William, second in line to the throne, for a tour of duty as a search and rescue helicopter pilot.

London says the warship -although one of the most modern in its fleet -- is replacing one that was already in the region and that William's deployment was a routine part of his job in the Royal Air Force.

"Argentina will find when she goes to the United Nations that it is an absolutely key part of the UN charter to support self-determination, and the people of the Falkland Islands want to maintain their status and want to maintain their connection to the United Kingdom," Cameron said.

The Falklands War broke out on April 2, 1982, when the then ruling military junta in Buenos Aires invaded in a bid to end British rule and London sent a task force to the region.

The 74-day war cost the lives of 649 Argentine and 255 British troops and three Falkland Islanders, but Britain retained control.

Britain has held the islands, home to about 3,000 inhabitants, since 1833.



Guihulngan: Civilian volunteers carry relief goods as they cross a damaged road destroyed at the height of the powerful earthquake in Guihulngan town, Negros Oriental province, central Philippines on February 9, 2012. Survivors of a deadly quake in the Philippines begged rescuers to keep searching for dozens of people buried in landslides, but officials said hopes of finding them alive were dim. (AFP PHOTO)

Striking police vacate Brazil's Bahia legislature

SALVADOR DE BAHIA (AFP) - More than 200 military police on strike over pay peacefully left a Brazilian state legislature yesterday ending a nine-day standoff after the arrest of their leader, officials said.

"The state assembly was vacated early this morning... Their leader, Marco Prisco, has been arrested," said government spokesman Robinson Almeida, of the standoff in the northeastern town of Salvador, in Bahia state.

Rio state legislature meanwhile approved a 39 percent increase in pay for police, firefighters and prison guards, hoping to head off a police strike there a week before the start of its Carnival celebrations.

"We will have a peaceful Carnival. We have confidence that the security forces will be responsible," deputy Andrea Correa, the government leader in the assembly, said in remarks quoted by the Globo G1 news website.

The strike in Bahia unleashed a massive crime wave in which more than 120 people were murdered in and around Salvador, Bahia's capital and Brazil's third largest city, in just nine days, more than twice the usual homicide rate.

Some 3,500 soldiers and elite police were sent to the area to restore order ahead of Salvador's famed Carnival celebrations later this month.

Army Lieutenant Colonel Marcio Cunha told reporters that Prisco and another strike leader had been arrested.

A government official insisted the end of the nine-day occupation of the Bahia legislature meant "the strike is over."

But the military police mutineers and their supporters insisted the strike was still on.

They are demanding a pay hike, better working conditions and an amnesty for Prisco, a political opponent of Bahia Governor Jaques Wagner, and 11 other police facing arrest under a court order. At least four them have already been arrested.

The unrest also sparked fears among federal government officials that the strike might spread to the states of Rio de Janeiro, Para, Parana, Alagoas, Espirito Santo and Rio Grande do Sul.

Press reports on Wednesday quoted police intelligence as saying the situation in those states was "explosive."

And in a court-ordered recording of telephone conversations between the Bahia strike leaders, which were aired by Globo television, Prisco is heard ordering that a national highway be blocked.

More than 80 killed in Syria, most in Homs

BEIRUT (AFP) - More than 80 people died in violence across Syria yesterday, activists said, with the majority killed in a fierce assault by regime forces on the flashpoint central city of Homs.

Rami Abdel Rahman of the Syrian Observatory for Human Rights said that of the 83 deaths nationwide, 63 people were killed in shelling and other violence in Homs province.

Fifty-three were killed in Homs city, which has been under a relentless bombardment by regime forces for the past six days, he told AFP.

Of these, Abdel Rahman said 35 civilians died in the Baba Amr neighbourhood of Homs and 11 were killed when a shell slammed into their house in the protest hub's Inshaat district.

He added that seven other

people died in the city's Khaldiyeh and Karm el-Zeytoun neighbourhoods.

Ten more people, five from the same family, died in shelling and heavy gunfire as regime troops pushed forth with a more than week-long assault on the town of Zabadani near the Syrian capital, Abdel Rahman added.

Elsewhere, seven security forces members were killed when rebels ambushed two buses near the southern town of Daraa, cradle of the revolt against the regime of President Bashar al-Assad.

Among other deaths in the armed forces, a military colonel was killed at his home in Rastan, in Homs province.

Four other civilians, including a young woman, were killed in the northwestern province of Idlib, and a man died of wounds he suffered the day before in Daraa.









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Health & Living

French weight loss drug 'killed at least 1,300'



Mediator, a drug licensed for use by diabetics that became widely prescribed in France as a slimming aid, "probably" caused at least 1,300 deaths before it was withdrawn, according to a study in the Pharmacoepidemiology & Drug Safety journal.

PARIS (AFP) - Mediator, a drug licensed for use by diabetics that became widely prescribed in France as a slimming aid, "probably" caused at least 1,300 deaths before it was withdrawn, a study published on Thursday

Mahmoud Zureik of the National Institute of Health and Medical Research (Inserm), who co-led the probe, told AFP that around 3,100 people had required hospitalisation during the 33 years during which the drug was sold.

However, these figures could well be an "underestimate," he said.

The study, appearing in the specialised journal Pharmacoepidemiology & Drug Safety, finetunes an estimate by Zureik in 2010 that the death toll from the scandal was between 1,000 and 2,000.

Mediator, known by its lab name as benfluorex, was initially licensed to reduce levels of fatty proteins called lipids, with the claim that it helped diabetics control their level of blood sugar.

But it also suppressed appetite, which meant it gained a secondary official use to help

obese diabetics lose weight.
In fact, it was widely sold on prescription for non-diabet-

ics wanting to slim.

In 2009, Mediator was pulled from the European market amid evidence that it damaged heart valves and caused pulmonary hypertension.

Its French manufacturer,

Servier, is being probed on suspicion of dishonest practices and deception.

The new study is an extrapolation based on figures for deaths from faulty heart valves, although not from hypertension, among major users of the drug.

The main data comes from France's national health insurance system, which said that 303,000 patients used Mediator in 2006.

According to Mediator, 145 million packets of Mediator were sold on the French market before the drug was pulled.

The Mediator case came to light after a scandal involving a similar type of anti-obesity drug, fenfluramine, in the late

US plastic surgeries rise for second straight year

WASHINGTON (AFP) - The number of Americans getting nips and tucks rose in 2011 for the second straight year despite difficult economic times, a major US plastic surgeons' groups said on Thursday.

A total of 13.8 million procedures, including everything from facelifts to boob jobs to anti-wrinkle injections, were performed in 2011 in the United States, up five percent over 2010.

"While the rate of economic recovery in the US is still uncertain, 2011 proved to be a good year for plastic surgery," said American Society of Plastic Surgeons president Malcolm Roth.

"Consumer confidence was up, auto sales rose 10 percent, so it is not surprising that we would also see increased demand for plastic surgery procedures.'

Breast augmentation remained the most popular operation, up four percent to 307,000 procedures last year, said the annual data from the American Society of Plastic Surgeons.

Facelifts made it to the top five for the first time since 2004, ousting tummy tucks for fifth place after nose reshaping, liposuction, and eyelid surgery.

Among men, a surgery to remove the double chin effect of extra neck skin nearly doubled in 2011 over a year earwith 21,000 such lier, procedures.

Lip augmentation also rose 49 percent to more that 25,000 procedures performed.

Roth said the rise in surgical procedures, up two percent over a year earlier to 1.6 operations, "reflect the demands of an aging boomer population."

However, the overall growth in the industry is being driven by minimally-invasive procedures, which rose six percent to nearly 12.2 million procedures in 2011.

Botox injections, soft tissue fillers to remove laugh lines and wrinkles, chemical peels, laser hair removal and microdermabrasion were the most popular image boosters for Americans.



Computer security firm Symantec extorted by hackers



(AFP) - Computer security firm Symantec confirmed it tried to turn the tables on hackers who threatened to release stolen source code if a demand for \$50,000 was not met.

An email exchange posted online at pastebin.com revealed how Symantec negotiated with "Yamatough," a supposed affiliate of hacker group Anonymous, to pay an extortion demand.

"The communications with the person(s) attempting to extort the payment from Symantec were part of the law enforcement investigation," the firm said in a released statement.

"Given that the investigation is still ongoing, we are not going to disclose the law enforcement agencies involved and have no additional information to provide."

No money ever changed hands.

Symantec recommended in January that users of its pcAnywhere software disable the product following the theft of source code from the California-based

security firm.
Symantec subsequently said that the latest release of the software is defended from attack and released an upgrade to protect older versions.

Symantec, in a technical white paper posted in January on the firm's website, said the vulnerability to pcAnywhere, which allows for remote PC to PC connections, was the result of a 2006 theft of source code

by hackers.

"We believe that source code for the 2006-era versions of the following products was exposed: Norton Antivirus Corporate Edition; Norton Internet Security; Norton SystemWorks (Norton Utilities and Norton GoBack); and pcAnywhere," Symantec said.

The only identified threat, however, was to pcAnywhere and not any of the Norton products.

Apple to debut 'iPad 3' in March: report



according to a report in Dow Jones-owned technology blog All Things D.

The latest in an ongoing stream of Apple rumors cited unnamed sources as saying that an "iPad 3" will make its debut at an event the California company will host in San Francisco in the first week of March.

The next-generation iPad will be shaped like the current model, but run on a faster computer chip and have improved graphics on par with those seen in Apple's coveted iPhones, according to the blog.

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Sci-Tech

Brain stimulation may boost memory: study



WASHINGTON (AFP) - California scientists said Wednesday they may have found a way to stimulate a part of the brain so that it forms memories more easily.

Someday, the process might be used to make a neuroprosthetic device, or thinking cap, that people could turn on when they need to remember new information, or it may even help people with dementia restore their memories.

But those possibilities, while intriguing, are far off in the future, said researchers at the University of California Los Angeles whose study on seven epilepsy patients appeared in the New England Journal of Medicine.

"Losing our ability to remember recent events and form new memories is one of the most dreaded afflictions of the human condition," said senior author Itzhak Fried, professor of neurosurgery at the David Geffen School of Medicine at UCLA.

"Our preliminary results provide evidence supporting a possible mechanism for enhancing memory, particularly as people age or suffer from early dementia," he said.

Using patients who already had electrodes implanted into their brains to track the origin of epileptic seizures, the researchers studied the effect of nerve stimulation in a part of the brain called the entorhinal cortex

The entorhinal cortex is considered the door-way to the hippocampus, the part of the brain where memories are formed and stored.

"The entorhinal cortex is the golden gate to the brain's memory mainframe," said Fried.

"Every visual and sensory experience that we eventually commit to memory funnels through that doorway to the hippocampus."

Patients played a video game in which they were driving a taxi to deliver riders to particular places in town, and they showed improved recall when the entorhinal cortex was stimulated.

"When we stimulated the nerve fibers in the patients' entorhinal cortex during learning, they later recognized landmarks and navigated the routes more quickly," said Fried. "They even learned to take shortcuts, reflecting improved spatial memory."

More research is needed to determine if deep-brain stimulation could boost other forms of recall such as verbal and autobiographical memories.

The study was funded by grants from the National Institute of Neurological Disorders and Stroke and the Dana Foundation which supports brain research.



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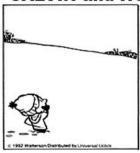
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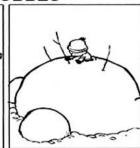


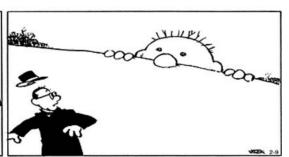




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Sudoku

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Complete the grid so that every row and every column contains the numbers 1 through 9 A number is Never repeated in a row or column. In addition every rectangle must contain the numbers 1 through 9

Finance

Bank of England to pump extra 50 bn pounds into economy

LONDON(AFP) - The Bank of England said yesterday it would prop up Britain's faltering economy with an additional £50 billion and keep interest rates at a record-low 0.50 percent as recession clouds hang over the country.

After a two-day gathering, the BoE's Monetary Policy Committee voted in favour of increasing its Quantitative Easing (QE) by £50 billion (60 billion euros, \$80 billion) to £325 billion over a three-month period.

The nine-member MPC panel also decided to keep the main interest rate at a record-low 0.50 percent, the central bank said in a statement.

London's stock market and sterling were little changed followed the expected announcements, which were made as Britain's economy buckles under the combined impact of state austerity and the eurozone debt crisis.

Also yesterday, the European Central Bank held its key lending rate at 1.0 percent, ahead of a crucial Brussels meeting seeking to avert a potentially catastrophic default by debt-laden Greece.

The BoE warned that the economic outlook remained clouded by the chronic crisis in the eurozone, which is Britain's main export market.

"In the United Kingdom, the underlying pace of recovery slowed during 2011, with activity falling slightly during the final quarter," it said.

"Some recent business surveys have painted a more pos-

itive picture and asset prices have risen.

"But the pace of expansion in the United Kingdom's main export markets has also slowed and concerns remain about the indebtedness and competitiveness of some euro-area countries."

The BoE rate has stood at 0.50 percent since March 2009 when it began injecting £200 billion into the economy under QE. The bank opted last October to increase the amount to £275 billion in an operation due to end this month.

Under QE, the central bank creates new cash that is used to purchase assets such as government and corporate bonds in the hope of giving a boost to lending and economic activity.

Recent data revealed that the economy contracted by more than expected in the fourth quarter, placing it dangerously close to another downturn.

Gross domestic product (GDP) dipped 0.2 percent in the three months to December. Another quarter of contraction would place Britain in a technical recession.

But data yesterday painted a slightly rosier picture, showing that industrial output was up in December, when Britain's trade-in-goods deficit also fell

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US House adopts insider trading ban

WASHINGTON (AFP) - The US House of Representatives yesterday overwhelmingly adopted a bill aimed at explicitly banning insider trading by lawmakers who face deep election-year anger at politicians and Wall Street.

With nine months before November elections and just one in ten Americans saying they approve of the job Congress is doing, the House voted 417-2 for the legislation as usually polarized Republicans and Democrats united.

Some outside critics had charged that existing securities fraud legislation already applies to lawmakers, while Democrats accused Republicans of watering down the Senatepassed bill -- but still backed it.

The vote in the Republicanled House set up a possible "conference" with the Democratic-controlled Senate to craft a compromise version that lawmakers would have to approve to send to President Barack Obama to sign into law

Both bills, adopted after Obama pushed lawmakers to act on the issue, bar lawmakers as well as families and staff and executive branch officials to enrich themselves by trading on non-public information.

Members of Congress often get private briefings from top corporate executives.

The House-passed measure would require disclosure of transactions in stocks, bonds, or commodities and other investments within 45 days while forbidding lawmakers and administration officials from getting preferential treatment in initial stock offerings.

The House stripped out a Senate-adopted amendment requiring that people who gather information from Congress for sale to investment firms -- so called "political intelligence" operators -- register as lobby-

JAKARTA, JAVA: AFP photo shows a street vendor preparing chicken sate, a traditional Indonesian barbecue, on a sidewalk along a busy Jakarta street on February 9, 2012. Indonesia cut its benchmark interest rate to a record low of 5.75 percent yesterday, as Southeast Asia's biggest economy tries to keep growth on track amid a global slowdown. Bank Indonesia (BI), the country's central bank, lowered its overnight interest rate by one-quarter of a percent, the first cut in three months taking advantage of easing inflation to support growth in a deteriorating global economy.

Exchange Rates Current as of: 02/09/2012 U.S.A 1.78 1.80 USD **Dutch Antilles** 100.00 100.20 98.00 **ANG** Canada 1.79 1.81 CAD Britiain 2.81 2.76 **GBP** Switzerland 195.41 196.13 196.93 CHF Netherlands 234.53 236.67 239.04 **EUR** Sweden 26.62 27.42 25.90 **SEK** Denmark 30.88 31.60 32.40 DKK Norway 31.57 30.05 30.77 NOK Japan 228.52 230.60 232.92 **JPY** (per 100) All rates for amounts up to AWG 100.00 per item.

Eurozone stalls Greek cash aid pending new conditions

BRUSSELS (AFP) - Eurozone finance ministers yesterday refused to give their immediate backing to a second bailout for Greece despite a last-minute deal in Athens on austerity measures demanded by creditors.

After rival Greek parties agreed a fresh round of deep cuts, triggering another general strike in Greece, Luxembourg

YESTERDAY'S Crossword Answer

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Prime Minister Jean-Claude Juncker said the Eurogroup of finance ministers may only decide on the rescue next week.

The ministers huddled in Brussels to review the deal reached in Athens aimed at unlocking a bailout package worth 130 billion euros (\$171 billion) and prevent a devastating default.

Greek Finance Minister Evangelos Venizelos urged his counterparts to endorse the debt rescue after political leaders in Athens agreed on a new round of austerity.

But German Finance Minister Wolfgang Schaeuble warned that the purpose of talks would be "to make clear to Greece and the partners in the negotiations what are the conditions for a second agreement"

Four months after European Union leaders agreed to mount a second bailout, Juncker said there were simply too many "points to clear up."



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Ancient and modern arts provide an interesting contrast with the opening of

"Capturing Modern Hieroglyphs" at Ateliers '89



Students of the Video Class and instructors



Aruba Five-O



Elvis Lopez with Instructors Erla, Craniv and Ellen

Ateliers '89, the Aruban foundation and center for art and cultural education, is hosting a 2-month exposition of the works produced by their most recent classes in Raku pottery and Video, titled "Capturing Modern Hieroglyphs."

The Raku course was taught by guest instructor Ellen Spijkstra, originally from Holland but a resident of Curacao since 1980, and the video course featured Erla Haraldsdóttir and Craniv Boyd, from Berlin, Germany as instructors, who also work extensively in Erla's nation of birth, Iceland. Craniv is a Liberian/American born and raised in Brooklyn, N.Y.

The title refers to the concept of distant future societies looking upon the artwork produced today as this culture looks at the hieroglyphics of ancient cultures, trying to understand their mentality and social structure. (One can't help wondering what they will conclude by watching the Jackass TV series or films.)

The main exposition room features Raku, a unique pottery favored for use during the ritualistic Japanese tea ceremony and named for Jurakudai, a palace in Kyoto.. In the 16th century, Sen Rikyū, the Japanese tea master, was involved with the construction of

the Jurakudai and had a tilemaker named Chōjirō produce hand-molded tea bowls for use in the wabi-styled tea ceremony that was Rikyū's ideal. The resulting tea bowls made were initially referred to as "ima-yaki" ("contemporary ware") and were also distinguished as Juraku-yaki, from the red clay employed in their manufacture. Hideyoshi presented Jokei, Chōjirō's son, with a seal that bore the Chinese character for Raku, which then became the name of the family that produced the wares. Both the name and the ceramic style have been passed down and stayed within the family (sometimes by adoption) to the present 15th generation. The name and the style of ware have become influential in both Japanese culand literature. Modifications and new techniques have been introduced contemporary artists around the world who became fascinated with this special

A graphic demonstration of the unique baking and glazing procedure was performed on the opening night. This included a pleasant sampling of how this pottery can affect the flavor of the beverage it contains with free samples of Saki in special Raku cups made by the class, complements of Aruba Trading Company.

The video class was assigned the task of remaking and re-interpreting an iconic piece from film, theater or literature, which they could produce within the limitations of the Aruban environment and their small class of 12 making up the production company. Final projects included scenes from "Eclipse" the Twilight series, "Casper the Friendly Ghost", and a remake of the opening credits from the 70's TV show "Hawaii Five-O" renamed "Aruba Five-0."

The results of both classes are a most fascination exposition contrasting ancient and modern arts, and showcasing the individual creativity of the students and instructors. The exposition is open to the public, gratis, Monday through Friday from 11:00 AM until 5:00 on the grounds of Ateliers '89, in Oranjestad at Dominicanessenstraat 34, across from Maria College; call 588-5776 or 565-4613 to arrange a tour and get directions.

by Rosalie Klein



demonstration of the Raku technique



the unique Raku cups technique fascinates





Oranjestad - 12 p.m.

Gold Coast Aruba: Great savings for large families on holiday rentals



Aruba's newest and most innovative gated community has enjoyed steady sales since breaking ground, as many are finding the secure surroundings and outstanding amenities are just what they were looking for before considering purchasing property on the island. Some owners are using the villas or town homes as vacation retreats rather than full time and are taking advantage of Gold Coast's rental services to turn their investment into ready in-

"The greater portion of home owners are using their "home away from home" in Aruba to escape the winter months, or spend holidays with the family on the island," noted Gold Coast developer Fito Croes. To assist in the demand for more complete facilities for groups and fami- lies, famed hotelier Ed Ma-lone has been placed in charge of the rental program.

Staying at Gold Coast is a very attractive proposition for those traveling with groups that would require multiple hotel rooms. Two and three bedroom Villas or Town Homes accommodate large numbers and offer extensive amenities along with a final cost resulting in considerable savings. The community is minutes to the best beaches and all the casino action, and offers a quiet and secluded getaway with two swimming pools and specialized services with more on the way, such as a fitness room, tennis courts and mini-mall. Ed can arrange maid service, babysitters, caterers, airline pick-up and drop-off; they even boast a shopping service to stock your shelves before arrival.

Gold Coast accommodations are elegant and spacious, offering privacy for parents or a few couples. Beautifully appointed kitchens and bathtion, individual washer/dryer, and are fully air-conditioned. Cribs, high chairs and hair dryers are available for a modest fee. Concierge services to arrange rental cars, spa appointments, activities



rooms grace each abode; barbecues and lounges are provided for friendly cookouts and truly savoring the island life. All homes come with cable TV, high-speed fiber-optic Internet connec-



and restaurant reservations are all part of the package.

escape is conducted in the

Check-in for your holiday

comfort of your vacation home, not while waiting on line at check-in desk. In every way, Gold Coast seeks to pamper their guests while providing them with the feeling of being in a cozy community, not the nor mally bustling resort, particularly experienced during the major holidays. If you wish an optimal vacation experience with great sav ings, visit their website: www.goldcoastaruba. com to get acquainted with the community and the layout, details and availability of accommodations, or call 586-2200 to talk personally to a Gold Coast representa-

Adorable and affordable; 5 Burgers Aruba offers an island twist to the great American Burger

Expatriates residing on Aruba, Aaron Rosie Walisever are living their dream: a home on paradise while welcoming all and sundry to their proud undertaking, 5 Burgers Aruba. Some may be quite well acquainted with a nationally known U.S franchise bearing the name "5", and patrons can expect the same great quality between the buns, but an expanded menu and Rosie and Aaron's fanatical dedication to giving too their customers what



Rosie and Aaron love their burger



Gouda Burger 2

they really want has resulted in a unique menu.

"You never get a second chance to make a first impression," comments Aaron; and upon entering 5 Burgers Aruba in The Village Mall in Palm Beach, one is struck by utterly spotless surroundings and a smiling, friendly, attentive service crew. Of course, the main item on the menu is burgers-the way they were meant to be, thick and juicy, made fresh daily and 100% pure beef, the kind that made the hamburger a traditional American treat.

Prices vary only slightly between regular and small (basically 2 patties or 1) with specialty items such as Gouda Burger, Farmer's Burger, Man Burger (almost 12 ounces of choice beef), and a Western Burger with crispy onion rings and BBQ sauce. All of these can be personalized with an incredible array of toppings, mushrooms, jalapeño peppers, bacon, cheese, lettuce, tomato...whatever the list goes on) at absolutely no extra cost.

5 Burger portions are island. Totally ENORMOUS! Aaron sugplus a great of gests that even their small burger, they serving of fries, which are worth a visit

made from hand-cut fresh Idaho potatoes, is enough to be shared by two. He was very amused to watch a famous French chef demonstrating the best way to make fried potatoes on a gourmet cooking show and could only comment "He stole my recipe!" Try them the English way-with vinegar, and you'll wonder how you ever ate fries without it. This same 5-star chef also swears by Gouda as the best topping for the ideal gourmet cheeseburger.

If you are a fan of crispy friend onion rings, as we are at THE MORNING NEWS, you cannot leave there without trying their secret recipe batterdipped gourmet rings, made from fresh, not frozen onions. Unquestionably, the best we have had anywhere, and for those that like a little spice, the fried jalapeños are a real treat. Aaron and Rosie have expanded their menu to accommodate certain tastes and dietary needs; they offer a tasty grilled chicken sandwich as

5 Burgers Aruba is open for lunch & dinner – daily hours are Noon to 10-ish; delivery is available to both the high-rise and low-rise hotel and beach district for orders over \$50. Enjoy a great lunch without ever leaving the beach by calling 586-3904. However, we suggest you stop by and enjoy their authentic, heartfelt hos pitality; it is not unusual for either owner or Manager Marc Anthony when things are not too busy, to sit and chat while sharing their knowledge of the island. Totally yummy and fun plus a great deal for a quality burger, they are definitely



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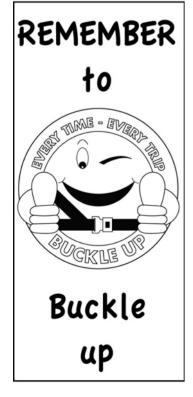
Redknapp favourite as England hunt for manager

LONDON (AFP) - England football chiefs vowed not to rush their search for a successor to Fabio Capello on Thursday as Tottenham manager Harry Redknapp remained tightlipped over taking the job.

Speaking at a Wembley press conference after one of the most dramatic 24 hours in English football history, Football Association chairman David Bernstein defended the organisation's handling of Capello's exit.

The 65-year-old Italian resigned on Wednesday, unhappy at the FA decision to strip John Terry of the England captaincy last week following the delay of his trial for racially abusing QPR player Anton Ferdinand.

Bernstein said Capello's decision to publicy air his criticism of the decision in comments to Italian media had created an "unsatisfactory situation" before crunch talks at Wembley on Wednesday.



Bernstein also would not rule out the possibility of England looking to an overseas coach to replace Capello.

Many regard Redknapp -cleared of tax evasion charges on Wednesday -- as the only viable candidate to replace Capello.

However, Redknapp said Thursday his focus was solely on preparing Tottenham, third in the Premier League, for their match against Newcastle this weekend.

Asked whether he might be in charge of England by the start of Euro 2012, Redknapp insisted: "I've never thought about it.

Earlier, former England manager Graham Taylor said Redknapp was "made for the job" of leading the national team, adding the Londoner was at the right stage of his career to take on the challenge.

"I just think that taking the England job is far better when you're coming towards the end of your career than when you're a young man. I think Harry is in many respects made for the job," Taylor told the BBC.

Taylor said few candidates could rival Redknapp if he chose to apply for the job. "The public want him, the players want him, sections of the media want him, so that's how it looks at the moment," Taylor said.

Meanwhile Capello broke his silence in a short statement dealing with his departure.

"I would like to thank all players, staff and Football Association for the professionalism they have shown during my years as manager of the English National Team," it read.

I wish all of them every success in achieving all their sporting goals."

Football: **Pearce to** manage England against the Dutch

LONDON (AFP) - Stuart Pearce will manage England in their friendly international against the Netherlands on February 29, Football Association (FA) chairman David Bernstein said.

Pearce, the England Under-21 manager, was given temporary control of the senior side for the match against the Dutch at Wembley following Fabio Capello's resignation as England manager on Wednesday.

Capello quit just four months before the start of Euro 2012 following the FA's decision to strip John Terry of the England captaincy ahead of the Chelsea defender's trial on charges of racially abusing QPR's Anton Ferdinand, which is due to take place after the tournament in Poland and Ukraine.

Former England full-back Pearce, who was Capello's assistant, will take charge of the Great Britain's men's Olympic team at the 2012 Games in London.

I can announce that Stuart Pearce will manage the England team against Holland," said Bernstein at a Wembley news conference on Thursday.

"He has huge experience outside and inside the organisation. He has been working with the under-21 team and has been working with Fabio for some time. I have got great confidence in Stuart, we will be in good hands.

Our priority then will be to appoint a new England manager."



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Football: Ajax in crisis as board quits over van Gaal row

AMSTERDAM (AFP) - Ajax technical director Danny Blind and the club's board resigned on Thursday following the row over the blocked appointment of Louis van Gaal as general manager of the Dutch footballing giants.

Ajax legend Johan Cruyff last week won his legal battle to prevent the appointment of van Gaal which had been made by the club's Council of Commissioners without consulting him - although he is one of the five board members.

"I have a clear vision of Aiax's future and van Gaal's arrival is part of that," said Blind. "Now that his arrival is no longer the case I can't and don't want to continue."

Both van Gaal and Cruyff are former Ajax coaches and have clashed in the past.

Cruyff took legal action to block his countryman's appointment and was backed by 15 coaches from the club's training centre.

Cruyff, 64, had restructured the club in recent years by giving more power to former plays such as Blind, Frank De Boer and Dennis Bergkamp, who are coaches, with Wim Jonk responsible for training.

"The coaches from the training centre are all former club players. I've always been 200percent behind this project and I maintain that it's very important for the club," said Cruyff, who feared that Van Gaal would dismantle his work.

Van Gaal, 60, had been due to work alongside Blind and commercial director Martin Sturkenboom as part of a new leadership structure at the home of the four-time European champions.

The former Bayern Munich coach managed Ajax between 1991 and 1997, notably leading them to the Champions League title in 1995, and was sporting director from 2003 to

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Tennis: Corretja's new-

look Spain open title

defence

PARIS (AFP) - Alex Corretja's

new-look Spain open their

Davis Cup title defence against

Just two months after lifting

the trophy for the fifth time

against Argentina in Seville,

Corretja takes over from Albert

Costa as the hosts bid to de-

fend their interests without

world number two Rafael

Nadal, David Ferrer and Feli-

The Spaniards are however

overwhelming favourites in

their first meeting with Kaza-

khstan, a team made up of

Russian-born players which

made its debut in the World

Former French Open win-

ner Juan Carlos Ferrero returns

for Spain after a two-year ab-

sence from the men's team

tournament, and he will be

joined by Nicolas Almagro,

Marcel Granollers and Marc

Ferrero, ranked 48, has a

minnows Kazakhstan

Oviedo starting today.

ciano Lopez.

Group last year.

Lopez.

Football:

There's only one Pele... insists Pele

LIBREVILLE (AFP) - Pele insisted here Thursday that there will never be another Pele as his parents had thrown away the cast.

The football icon was speaking at the unveiling of a statue in his honour at the L'Amitie stadium in Libreville which on Sunday will stage the final of the Africa Cup of Nations.

"Who is better than Pele?" said Gabon president Ali Bongo Ondimba at the inauguration.

In answer Pele joked at a press conference: "To see another Pele being born would be difficult. Perhaps there will be a player better than Pele, one similar to Pele, but a new Pele is impossible - my father and mother have stopped the machine."

Pele then remembered a trip to Gabon in 1967 with his club Santos.

"The father (Omar Bongo) of the president (Ali Bongo) was president at the time. He said: 'We're going to stop the war because we want to see Pele. And the president stopped the war. It was fantastic. They stopped, we came and we left."

Santos and Pele did take part in an African tournament taking in Gabon and Zaire in June 1967.

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17-7 Davis Cup record and last played in 2009. The 32-year-old 2003 Roland Garros champion opens against 61st-ranked Mikhail Kukushkin on Friday with world number 11 Almagro, who has a 3-2 record, then taking on 132nd-ranked Andrey Golubev. On Saturday Granollers teams up with Davis Cup debutant Lopez in the doubles against Yuriy Schukin and Evgeny Korolev, with the reverse singles on Sunday decid-

play at Wiener Neustadt. Corretja said he had no problem with Nadal skipping

ing who will advance to meet

either Russia or Austria who

the tie.

Last year Russia failed to reach the quarter-finals for the first time since 2004 and 79th-ranked Igor Kunitzyn opens their campaign against Austrian number one Jurgen Melzer, ranked 40.

In the second rubber, Alex Bogomolov Jr., playing for Russia for the first time in Davis Cup, will meet Andreas Haider-Maurer.

Russian captain Shamil Tarpischev has saved his most experienced Davis Cup players, Nikolay Davydenko and Mikhail Youzhny, for Saturday's doubles rubber, against Oliver Marach and Alexander Peya.

In other ties, Canada face a tough task despite hosting France in Vancouver.

Guy Forget's France are favourites despite doubts over the fitness of Gael Monfils who has a knee injury. The French line-up also includes Jo-Wilfred Tsonga, Julien Benneteau and Michael Llodra.

World number three Roger Federer and Stanislaw Wawrinka, ranked 28, will lead Switzerland against record 13time winners the United States on clay at Fribourg.

The United States have not won since 2007 and have a good chance of progressing with a team that includes eighth-ranked Mardy Fish and John Isner, ranked 17, with Ryan Harrison and Mike Bryan on doubles duty.

Djokovic will skip the first round to be played in southern Serbian town Nis on February 10-12 in order to get some rest from the busy season.

Wax works for museum piece Djokovic

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Tennis world No. 1 Novak Djokovic poses next to his wax sculpture revealed on February 9, 2012, at the wax museum in the central Serbian town of Jagodina.

BELGRADE (AFP) - Tennis world number one Novak Djokovic on Thursday attended the unveiling of his own likeness in wax in the central town of Jagodina, local media reported.

Djokovic returned to Serbia, where he is considered a national hero, after defending his Australian Open title in the longest Grand Slam final of all time against Rafael Nadal.

After a brief ceremony in the museum -- which hosts

some 28 prominent personalities from Serbia, including former top NBA player Vlade Divac -- Djokovic reportedly went to a ski resort on Kopaonik mountain in the south of the country.

He had already announced he would not take part in Serbia's Davis Cup tie against Sweden this weekend to get some rest from the busy season

Djokovic was a key player when Serbia won their first Davis Cup title in 2010.



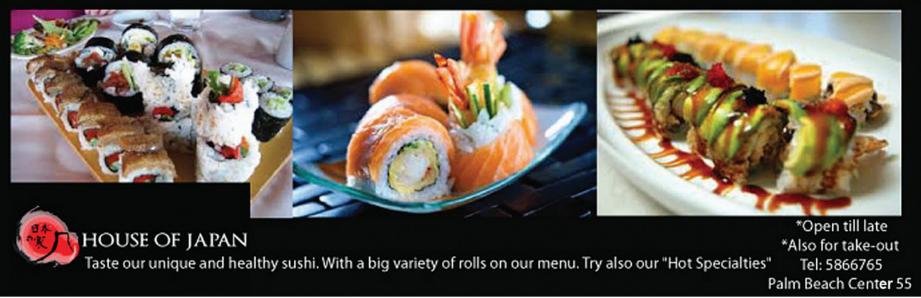




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Golf: Cabrera-Bello leads Dubai Desert Classic

DUBAI (AFP) - Spaniard Rafael Cabrera-Bello made the most of perfect scoring conditions on the opening day of the \$2.5 million Dubai Desert Classic and shot an impeccable round of nine-under par 63 to lead the tournament by two shots.

Cabrera-Bello, who teed off early in the morning, made nine birdies in his first 11 holes, and then parred his way in for a bogey-free 63. Germany's Marcel Siem and Scotland's Scott Jamieson were tied for second place at seven-under par 65.

The 2009 champion and world number 2 Rory McIlroy got over a slow start and after being one-over through eight holes, the Ulsterman reeled in





Spain's Rafael Cabrera-Bello follows a shot during the first round

seven birdies in his next 10 holes to close at a six-under par 66. Joining him in tied fourth place was the world number 4 Martin Kaymer, who eagled his final hole.

Also on 66 were 2001 champion Thomas Bjorn of Denmark, the big-hitting Nicolas Colsaerts of Belgium, South Africa's Richard Sterne and the French duo of Gregory Bourdy and Romain Wattel.

Defending champion Alvaro Quiros opened with a twounder par 70, while world number 3 Lee Westwood of England was one shot better at 69.

In complete contrast to last week's Qatar Masters, which was reduced to 54 holes because of high winds, the players could not have asked for better conditions. There was hardly any wind throughout the day, and with the greens playing soft on the opening day, the course was there for the taking.

And nobody did that better than Cabrera-Bello. In fact, his start was so good that thoughts of a possible 59 did creep into his mind.

Cabrera-Bello, who shot a round of 11-under par 60 to win the 2009 Austrian Open by one shot, said: "It came through my mind for a second, not really the 60, but I was 9-under after 11, so I thought I

can get to 59.

"But then, I quickly took it out of my mind as just a silly thought and told myself 'just play one shot at a time'. And I'm glad I stopped thinking about it."

The 27-year-old world number 119 said the closing stretch of seven pars after the roaring start, did not frustrate him one bit.

"No, not at all. I was aware that the last holes (he finished on the ninth) were tough holes, especially the stretch from 4 to 9. So, I was actually happy I was parring them with no major difficulties.

"I was glad I was giving myself the birdie chances, and I just hoped maybe one of them will drop, but that was it. I was fine with just parring them," said Cabrera-Bello.

Siem looked good to catch up with him, but after being eight-under par through 17 holes, he bogeyed the par-5 18th to finish on seven-under par. Jamieson also played a bogey-free round and mixed five birdies with an eagle on the par-5 13th.

McIlroy said it was his decision to let his caddie JP Fitzgerald help him with his line of putt halfway through the round, turned around his fortune.

Cycling: 1997 Tour de France winner Ullrich banned



LAUSANNE (AFP) - Germany's 1997 Tour de France winner Jan Ullrich on Thursday received a two-year ban for a blood doping offence, the Court of Arbitration for Sport (CAS) announced.

CAS also ruled that all of Ullrich's results since May 1, 2005, be annulled.

The German, who retired in November 2007, thus sees his third-placed finish in the 2005 Tour de France written off.

"The CAS has partially upheld the appeal filed by the UCI (International Cycling Union) and has found Jan Ullrich guilty of a doping offence," CAS said.

The CAS hearing came about after the UCI appealed to the court against the Swiss Olympic Committee's decision to halt an investigation into Ullrich's past.

The Swiss Olympic committee, with whom Ullrich had a licence, had decided not to

pursue the investigation about Ullrich, who lived in Switzerland, because the German resigned from the Swiss cycling federation in 2006.

Ullrich, the former T-Mobile lead rider, was linked to the Operation Puerto scandal in 2006 after samples of his blood were found during a police raid on Spanish doctor Eufemiano Fuentes who was at the centre of a doping ring.

Ullrich has always inisted he is innocent and has never doped.

CAS saw it otherwise, however, with secretary-general Matthieu Reeb saying the date of May 1, 2005, had been "retained because it is established that Jan Ullrich was fully engaged with the doping programm of Doctor Fuentes at least from that date".

Apart from his 1997 Tour win and his third-placed showing in 2005, Ullrich also finished second in the world's toughest and most prestigious race on five occasions (1996, 1998, 2000, 2001, 2003) and fourth in 2004.

Other principal victories Ullrich notched up were podium-topping showings in the 1999 Tour of Spain and the 2004 Tour of Switzerland, as well as claiming Olympic gold at the 2000 Sydney Games in the road race and silver in the time-trial.

